

It's much ado about nothing

Wealdstone 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

THE late Will Shakespeare turned up just the title for last Tuesday night's Premier Floodlight League excursion — "Much Ado About Nothing".

By Mike Whitesman

Forsooth! There was an awful lot going on, yet nothing much happening — except, for record purposes, the demise of Wycombe's 100 per cent run in Section B this season.

Any satisfaction stayed with the Lower Mead club. Victory must have eased the pain of Wanderers' already complete Isthmian League double.

But, although it was Wealdstone's second 1-0 defeat of a top team in days — they beat Enfield on the previous Saturday — there was nothing significant about it. And Wycombe remain as likely winners of the Amateur Cup tie pending on January 9.

The contrast between Tuesday and their previous floodlight fixture — the 9-0 embarrassment of Oxford City — emphasised Wanderers' major problem as Christmas approached.

Again, as against Maidstone

and Ilford, they missed the fire, the drive, the domineering attitude which has been so much a part of the Loakes Park success story this season.

Yet an almost full strength Wealdstone had their woodwork to thank twice for two points that might have been served out any way at any time.

Ted Powell, playing as a midfield schemer, did little to suggest he is made for the role. But, after 32 minutes, his shot swung menacingly out of the cold night air before dropping onto the Stones' crossbar with 'keeper Thomas nervously eyeing its flight.

While Thomas generally surprised home supporters with some fine handling, his comrades seemed to be pushing Wycombe back as the interval approached.

Former Oxford City striker, Pentecost pushed the ball into the side netting from a melee near the visitors' line and later, only a foul on Kevin O'Brien forced the referee to stop play with Wycombe again in a touch of trouble.

The decisive breakthrough came nine minutes into the new period, when, following some hectic action in front of Wycombe's net, Billy Johnson drove the ball hard and straight

and the diving O'Brien had little chance of stopping a goal. Lack of defensive covering could take the blame.

Perhaps Wanderers' most heartening prize of the evening was a cool, efficient display by Iain MacLean, who now has fresh incentive with Keith Blunt's departure set for April.

He showed well against Wealdstone's speedy wingmen, and Yerby, their little number seven, proved particularly active.

Gerry Olsen, 'ex-Chesham man, twice made things tricky for the visitors, but Geoff Anthony went closest to adding to either side of the scoreline.

In the 68th minute, he rocked the Stones' crossbar, only for the rebound to be kicked wildly across goal by Bernie Bremer.

WEALDSTONE: Thomas; Dafforn, Hand; Williams, Olsen, Rapley; Yerby, Mahon, Richie, Pentecost, Johnson.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: O'Brien; MacLean, Gale; Powell, Faulkner, Rundle; Anthony, Baker, Searle, Bremer, Hutchinson. Sub.: Fuschiello (not used).

Half-time 0-0. Goalscorers: Wealdstone — Johnson (54).